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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5918
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1248
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 4965
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3405
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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE JIRGA

REF: KABUL 2005

Classified By: Charge Peter Bodde for reasons 1.5 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) In response to reftel, PolOff spoke June 25 with Minister of Tourism and Culture GG Jamal, one of five members of the Pakistan jirga commission. Jamal reported that the two commissions had not discussed the duration of the upcoming jirga. Under jirga tradition, he said, such a conversation would be inappropriate, as only the full jirga can decide such questions. That said, the Pakistani commissioners are mindful of what could happen once 700 participants are given free access to a microphone. The commission is encouraging participants from this side of the border to choose designated spokesmen on various issues so that people do not make the same statements over and over.

¶2. (C) According to Jamal, the working plan is for the jirga to agree upon a set of issues to be pursued by a binational working committee, which then will meet regularly to develop suggested outcomes. Once the committee finishes its task, the jirga will reconvene to discuss the proposal.

¶3. (C) Reftel reports that Karzai is claiming that Pakistan will not include leaders from the Awami National Party, the Pakhtoon Milli Party, or the coalition of religious parties. Jamal has assured us that all parties are represented on the list the commission presented to President Musharraf for approval. Indeed, the draft list includes all the ardent Pashtun nationalists reftel states Karzai would like to attend the jirga (Asfandiyar Wali Khan, Afriasiab Khattak, and Mahmoud Khan Achekzai). That said, Jamal could not guarantee the President would approve all three. (Comment: Karzai's interventions on this issue are most unhelpful and serve only to fuel Pakistani fears that the jirga will discuss Durand Line issues or Pashtun independence. We understand that President Musharraf was so upset by Karzai's invitation to Awami National Party Leader Asfandiyar Wali Khan to participate in the jirga as a guest of Afghanistan that Musharraf raised the invitation letter with Secretary Rice. End Comment.)

¶4. (C) Also on the draft participant list is the Leader of the Opposition, Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman (head of JUI-F), a vocal and strident critic of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan. Reftel states that Karzai believes Fazl should be a jirga member. We cannot predict where President Musharraf will come down on this question.

¶5. (C) Comment: It appears the fault lines of the last six months continue. The Pakistani commissioners want a jirga in the tradition of Pashtun Wali: egalitarian, inclusive, and male. Many of our Pashtun contacts complain to us that the Afghan side seems to be expecting something closer to a conference than a traditional jirga. Jamal has warned us from the beginning that, regardless of what Karzai thinks, it is impossible to script a true jirga. People will say what they want to say. That said, he and the Interior Minister are committed to making this jirga a success and to working toward peace in the Pashtun area. We are convinced they understand the importance we place on a successful jirga. More importantly, they understand that President Karzai needs a positive outcome for his own political reasons; commissioners tell us they are motivated by that fact more than any other.

PATTERSON